

The University of North Carolina
at Greensboro

JACKSON LIBRARY



CQ

no. 1378

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

SEACRAVES, ELEANOR SUE KODY. Drawings and Paintings. (1976)
Directed by: Mr Walter Barker. Pp. 4.

The thesis consisting of oil paintings and pencil drawings
was exhibited in the Weatherspoon Art Gallery of the University of
North Carolina at Greensboro from April 18 to May 9, 1976.

A 35 mm color slide of each work is on file in the Jackson
Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis for Entry Seagraves

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Seagraves
1976

Approved by:

Walter Barker
Thesis Director

DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS

by

Eleanor Sue Kody Seagraves

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1976

Approved by

Walter Barker
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser

Walter Barker

Committee Members

Pat G. [unclear]

Gilbert [unclear]

Joseph Cray

Joan [unclear]

Walter Barker

April 13, 1976
Date of Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis director, Walter Barker for his guidance and support during the entire time I have worked toward this degree. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee; Peter Agostini for seeing the problems and pointing in the right direction, Gilbert Carpenter whose ideas and thinking I have often used as a starting point in my work, Joseph Crivy for his special insight and understanding and Joan Gregory for her inspiration, encouragement and support. Thanks also to Carl Goldstein who made a major contribution to my understanding of the history of art.

I would especially like to thank Ed Seagraves for encouraging me to continue until I reached this goal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL PAGE	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.	iii
TEXT OF THESIS.	1
CATALOGUE	5

The purpose of this thesis is to produce a body of work--drawings and paintings--based on close observation of carefully chosen and arranged subject matter. Included are still life drawings and paintings of fruit and drawings of people.

Types of fruit chosen are pears, plums, eggplants and apples, fruits which seem special and elegant to me. Each piece of fruit is individually selected by such criteria as distinct appearance, fully volumetric form, lush color, and unblemished surface. Models chosen are persons for whom I feel a special attraction for a variety of reasons. He or she might appear elegant, stately, radiant, be sombre or seem depressed, but is always a person with a well shaped head, regular well proportioned features and no flaws which will cause undue attention to some part. The person also has to be cooperative and available for sittings over an extended period of time.

Various arrangements for the fruit still lifes have been explored. Each composition is limited to one type of fruit, which I feel will help to set the work apart from traditional still life paintings. My early work includes pairs of fruit arranged symmetrically or asymmetrically on a tablecloth near a wall. This simple composition allows the viewer to perceive the work as a unit and then focus attention on the individual characteristics and appearance of each piece of fruit. Careful attention is paid to space between and around objects. Felt equilibrium is the controlling factor in the placement of objects.

Another series of paintings includes those arranged in rows. They are exactly that which they appear to be--five plums or seven pairs lined up on a tablecloth. After the initial reaction to this arrangement the viewer may scrutinize individual objects, noting that each differs from the next in general appearance, form, weight, color, texture, direction and shape of shadow cast. Space between and around objects is considered a positive component although the fruit always remains the dominant element. These pieces of fruit can also be read as objects with anthropomorphic associations which make their presence felt, both individually and as a group.

Another arrangement is the cluster. I feel this type of composition increases the magical quality of these specially chosen fruits. To me, the group has more visual impact and makes a stronger statement than the individual. There is an attempt to achieve a metaphysical aura around groups of plums by placing them high up in the composition, hovering slightly out of reach, with the drop of a tablecloth in front acting as a barrier to keep the viewer at a distance. The glow of a yellowish tinted white cloth and the strongly contrasting deep purple plums are planned as part of this mysterious aura I wished to evoke. A further attempt to transcend ordinary material existence can be seen in the drawing and painting of eggplants. The objects are surrounded by billowing folds of cloth which act as a nest for this remarkable fruit.

Throughout this series of paintings, off white or light colored backgrounds--table cloths, walls or draperies--are deliberately used to focus maximum attention on the objects. I enjoy the visual shock

and am stimulated by the wide range of brilliant hues of the fruit contrasted with the equally complex maze of subtle color shifts found within the cloth or wall surface. Various light situations have been tried--both artificial and natural--but always used to emphasize the special qualities of each object and to aid in describing form.

The drawings of people are studies which are to serve as a foundation on which to base further work. An attempt is made to gain insight into each person; to understand his personality, lifestyle, thinking and feelings and then to incorporate some of this information into the drawing.

Close observation is a key factor in this body of work. Through careful attention to detail the importance of the individual is proclaimed. An attempt is made to show each person or fruit as a fully rounded object occupying its own space, each different from any other similar object, each special in its own way.

Various ways of using paint and pencil have been explored. Some paintings exhibit very controlled brushwork, others show freely brushed on strokes. Similarly, the pencil drawings reveal how the tool is used so that the works may be read as paint on canvas, pencil on paper. Ideally an interaction of artist with medium, and medium with content occurs, so that the final form supports that which I wish to say.

During production of this thesis, I have looked at and been influenced by the work of many artists. I adopted Cezanne's use of areas of color placed side by side to describe a volumetric form in a shallow space box, Manet's free brushwork which calls attention to the

surface of the canvas and attempted to emulate the great nuance of color he used, (specifically in the pale tablecloths of his still lifes).

An early phase of my work is related to Pop Art such as Jasper Johns' beer cans, Wayne Thiebaud's pies and Claes Oldenburg's pastries.

My fruit is simply lined up and meant to exist as objects. Giorgio Morandi was a very important discovery for me. My work was already moving in a similar direction and I felt an immediate kinship with his mysterious, strangely dignified objects simply arranged in near empty or undefined space.

In my work with people I owe a debt to Rembrandt for his psychologically penetrating portraits, and to Thomas Eakins for his objective, yet painterly portraits which reveal the inner man. An important influence on my thinking has been the photography of the late Diane Arbus. I share her view that the facade often reveals the inner person and have used this idea in my drawings of people.

CATALOGUE

Oils on Canvas

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Size</u>
1. Two Pears on Blue Ground	1974	8 x 10
2. Two Pears Standing	1975	8 x 10
3. Seven Pears on a Tablecloth	1975	14 x 20
4. Four Pears on a Plate	1975	11 x 13
5. Ten Plums on a Tablecloth	1975	10 x 12
6. Four Pears on a Shelf	1976	14 x 19
7. Two Eggplants on Cloth	1976	11 x 14
8. Seven Apples on Cloth	1976	16 x 22
9. Seven Plums on Cloth	1976	11 x 13
10. Nine Plums on Cloth	1976	12 x 16

Pencil Drawings

11. Study of Peter	1974	14 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$
12. Two Pears Standing	1975	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
13. Eggplant on Cloth	1976	10 x 14
14. One Pear on a Plate	1976	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
15. Seven Pears on a Plate	1976	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
16. Two Pears on Cloth	1976	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$